



Creating Inclusive Early Childhood & Pre-K Opportunities for ALL Children

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BEST FOR ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.

ACADEMICS

ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE

STUDENT READINESS

TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

EDUCATORS

TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE THE TOP STATE IN WHICH TO BECOME AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL



Objectives

- Review IDEA / LRE for preschool children with disabilities
- Explore strategies for ensuring a continuum of services is available to preschool children with disabilities in each district
- Discuss strategic funding strategies to overcome barriers and provide equal opportunities in the Pre-K setting



IDEA & Preschool Least Restrictive Environment

Least Restrictive Environment

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.



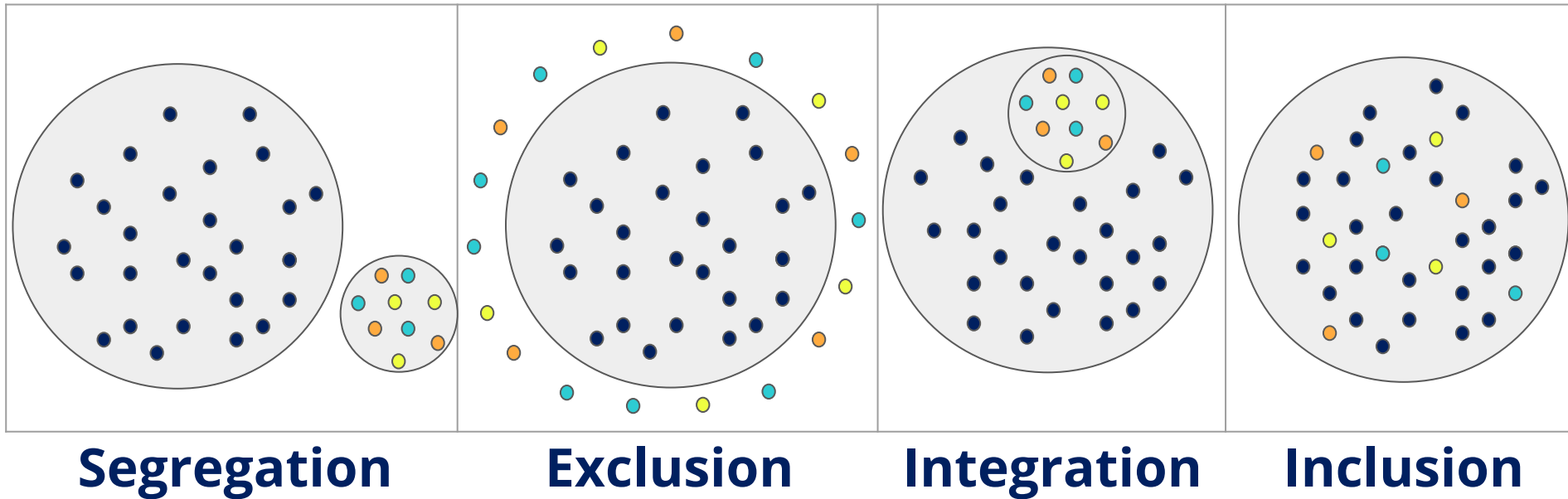
Least Restrictive Environment § 300.114 LRE - (A)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

“... presumes that first placement option for preschool students with disabilities is the regular public preschool the child would attend if they did not have a disability.”

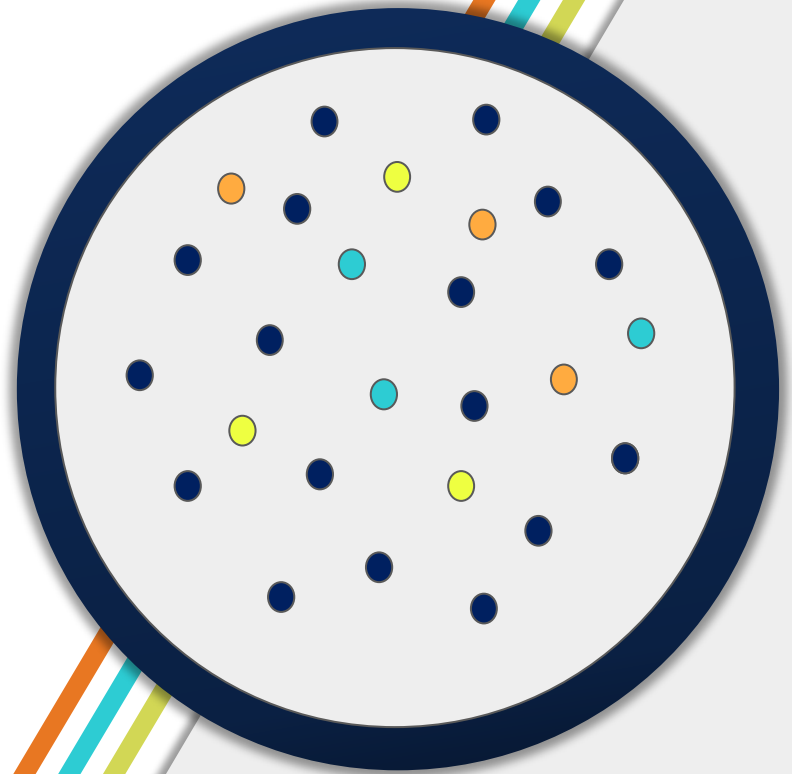


How would you describe these preschool models?



Defining Inclusion

- At least 50% of children on the daily roster do **not** have IEPs.
- One or more of the students on the daily roster has an IEP.
- Children with disabilities receive the majority of their services (more than 50%) within the regular education classroom.



Meaningful Inclusion

Children with disabilities:

- are fully included in all social and learning opportunities;
- receive services within the regular education early childhood setting and routines;
- receive the level of instructional supports that match their individual learning needs.

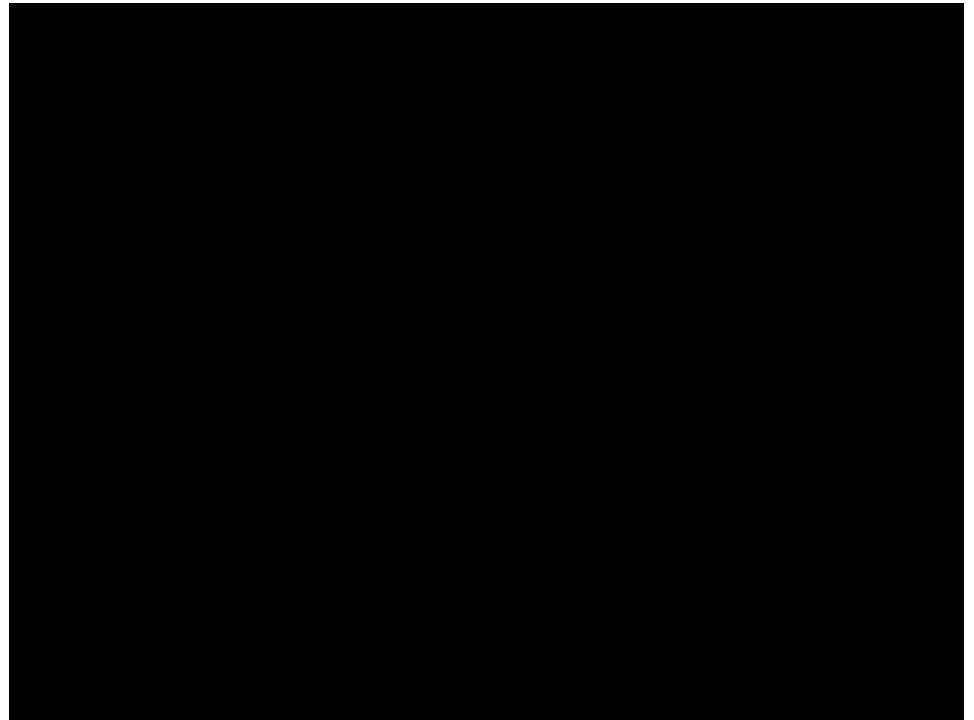
Benefits of Meaningful Inclusion



- Children with disabilities experience greater cognitive, social-emotional, and communication development.
- Children without disabilities demonstrate greater compassion and deeper understanding of diversity.
- Educators increase understanding of individualized supports, which ultimately benefits all children.

Inclusion is not a place, the name of a classroom, or a strategy...

Creating truly accessible classrooms for children means transforming ourselves and our systems to make them better for everyone.



Crafting a Strong Vision Statement

Crafting a Strong Vision Statement

1. Use the list of values to identify your core values.
1. Write a vision statement about inclusive Pre-K.
2. Share your vision statement.
3. Revisit your vision statement to see if it encompasses your vision of inclusive Pre-K. Revise as needed.

[Creating a Vision Statement Handout](#)



Preschool Program Models & Funding Strategies

Peer Model Programs

- District incorporates peer models into classrooms serving students with disabilities
- Peer seats are offered to:
 - Teacher's children
 - Child-find screenings
 - Children who did not meet income eligibility for other programs
- Teachers are dually certified



Fee-Based Peer Program

- Charges a fee for children from the community or children of employees to attend the Pre-K program
- Some seats are held for Pre-K children with disabilities whose LRE is the regular education setting

LEA Funded Classroom

- LEA funds, including Title funds, may be used to create an additional regular education preschool classroom
- District determines process for selecting children to fill LEA seats
- Some seats are held for Pre-K children with disabilities whose LRE is the regular education setting
- Services may be provided by integrated services or a dually certified teacher



Voluntary Pre-K Programs

- Provides regular education preschool option to income eligible children with and without disabilities
- Requires a minimum of 10% of the students enrolled to be students with disabilities, representing the various disability categories in the district



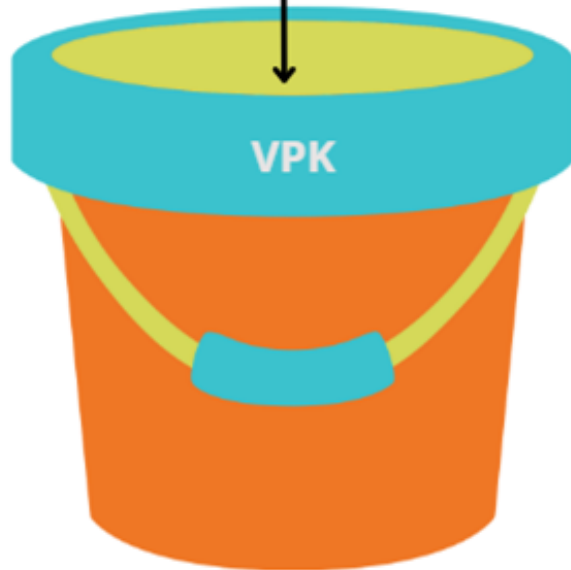
VPK Enrollment Process

SPRING THROUGH SEPTEMBER

1

PRIORITY

ALL INCOME-ELIGIBLE 4
YEAR OLDS (WITH OR
WITHOUT AN IEP)



SEPTEMBER 15 AND ONWARD

1

PRIORITY

ALL INCOME-ELIGIBLE
4 YEAR OLDS (WITH
OR WITHOUT AN IEP)

2

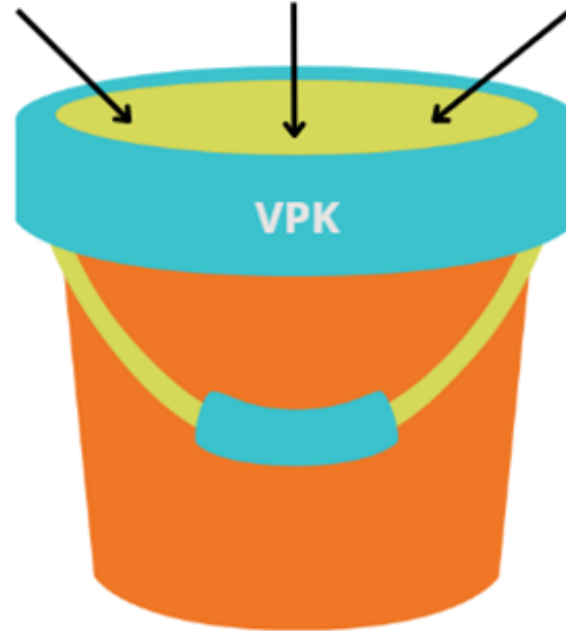
NEXT PRIORITY

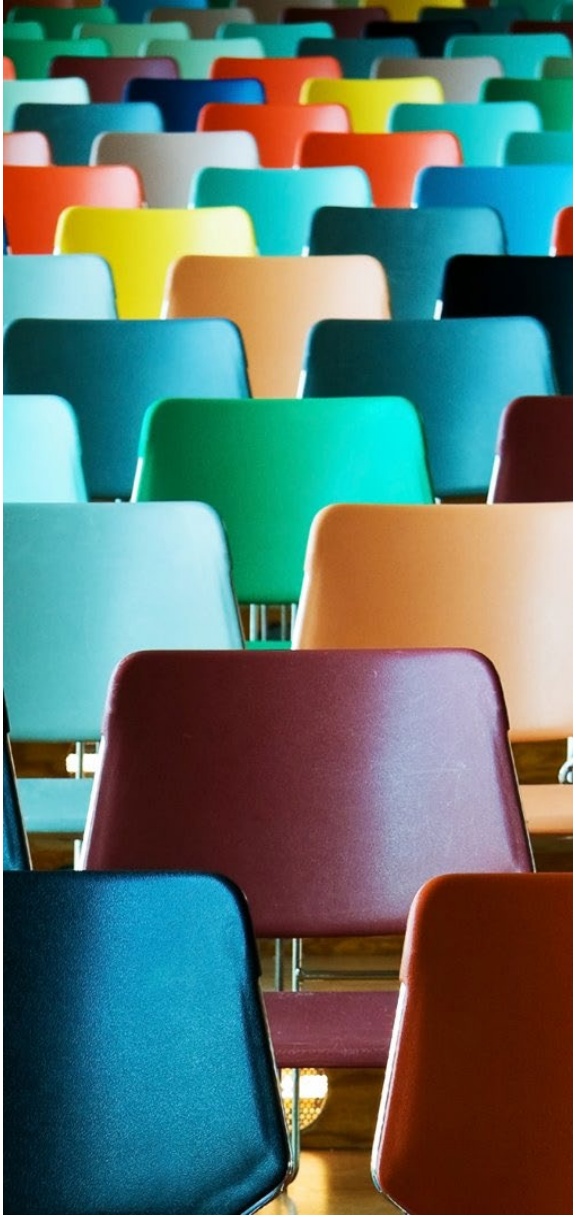
ALL INCOME-ELIGIBLE
3 YEAR OLDS (WITH
OR WITHOUT AN IEP)

3

FINAL PRIORITY

NON-INCOME-ELIGIBLE 3
AND 4 YEAR OLDS (WITH
OR WITHOUT AN IEP)





VPK: True or False

- 20 VPK seats could be spread among 4 different classrooms.
- Students with speech and language impairments are the best option to meet inclusion requirements in a VPK classroom.

VPK: True or False



- Children must be potty trained to enroll in VPK.
- A VPK student can remain in VPK following the diagnosis of a disability.
- A child can be released from a VPK program if their behavior continually puts other children in danger.



Braided Programs

- District divides various available program seats (VPK, LEA, 619, etc.) among multiple classrooms
- Services are provided by:
 - Dually certified teacher
 - Integrated services
 - Itinerant services



Braided Program Example

Current Model

619 Self-Contained

12 students with disabilities

VPK

20 students with and without disabilities who are income eligible

LEA Funded Classroom

20 students

New Model

EC Classroom 1

- 8 VPK students
- 2 VPK SWDs
- 4 students with disabilities
- 2 LEA funded students

EC Classroom 2

- 5 VPK students
- 2 students with disabilities
- 10 LEA funded students

EC Classroom 3

- 5 VPK students
- 4 students with disabilities
- 8 LEA funded students

Braided Funds

- Two or more funding sources braid funds with each maintaining its own identity
- The use of funds matches the purpose of the funding source, as defined by the federal, state, and/or local program



Classroom Examples

General Education Pre-K
(combination of seats from
VPK, LEA, 619)

Teacher Endorsement:
Dually Certified Pre-K or
General Education Pre-K



Personnel Funding Examples

619 Funding

- ✓ Special education assistant
- ✓ Dually certified teacher
- ✓ Itinerant teacher

VPK Funding

- ✓ General education teacher
- ✓ Dually certified teacher
- ✓ General education assistant

LEA Funding

- ✓ Any pre-K personnel

Tuition-Based Funding

- ✓ Any pre-K personnel

Itinerant Services

Special education teacher:

- Travels to various regular education classrooms serving students with disabilities
- Co-teaches in regular education classrooms to provide services in natural routines and activities
- Visits community programs (Early Head Start, private childcare, etc.) to provide services in the regular education setting



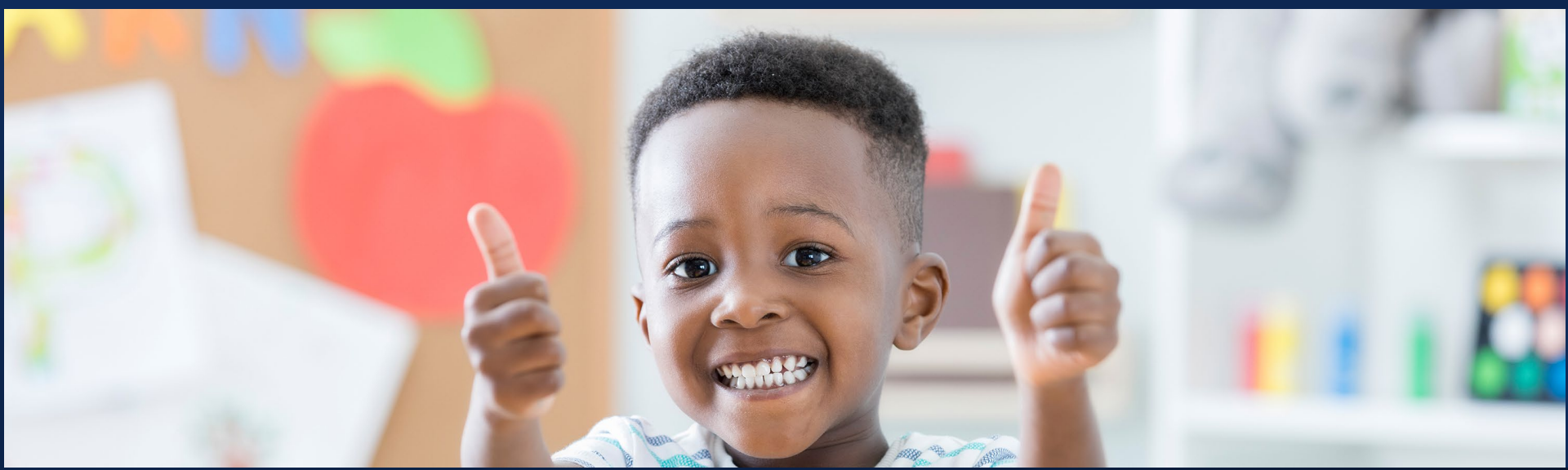
3 - 2 -1 Closing Reflection

3: Write down three things you learned.

2: Write down two things you are excited about.

1: Write down one question you still have.





Thank You!

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